

Village of Oak Park

ARPA Community Request Application

1. Project name (if you have more than one project, use a separate impact sheet for each):

Renovation and Redevelopment of the Write Inn Hotel

2. Contact Person: Lynda Schueler, CEO **Email:** lschueler@housingforward.org

Agency Overview:

3. Please describe your agency and your organization's mission and/or operations:

Housing Forward is one of Cook County's leading homelessness services provider organizations, providing a coordinated response that allows people experiencing a housing crisis to quickly resolve their situation. We offer comprehensive, wrap-around support from the onset of a financial or housing crisis to its resolution, preventing homelessness whenever possible, and providing permanent, stable housing for the most vulnerable members of our community. Each year, Housing Forward assists 2,000 individuals and families with services that are tailored to their immediate needs. To ensure that we can assist them most effectively, we have developed a three-pronged strategy for addressing housing crisis and ending homelessness:

- **Prevent:** Keeping people in their home is the best approach to the prevention of homelessness. We mitigate the loss of housing to avoid the trauma of eviction and homelessness.
- **Respond:** We identify and quickly connect people experiencing homelessness with basic needs like safety, food, and shelter, then link them to services to begin resolving their crisis immediately. We work to align a community, and its programs and services, around one common goal—to make homelessness rare, brief, and nonrecurring.
- **Stabilize:** We end homelessness one person at a time through housing. Safe, stable housing is the foundation on which clients become self-sufficient and rebuild their confidence so they can not only live, but thrive in their community.

Housing Forward offers a wide array of crisis responses and longer-term housing options including interim housing, rapid-rehousing, permanent supportive housing, and long-term rental support for 400+ individuals annually. Housing Forward also offers on-going case management, housing location and pre-tenancy services, an employment readiness program, street outreach, and a homeless prevention program that offers financial assistance, diversion, and stabilization services.

4. For your most recently ended fiscal year, provide the following:

- Total revenues** \$14,901,337
- Total expenses** \$14,446,138
- Included in total expenses, how much was for salaries/benefits?** \$5,493,611
- Total ending cash and liquid investments** \$1,396,981

5. Are there similar non-profit or private organization that perform essentially the same services as your agency? If so, please list them. No

Collaboration & Community Partnerships

6. Do you have partners that you are collaborating with to support this program financially or in other ways? Name them and the support you will receive from them.

- Cook County, \$6,500,000
- State of Illinois, \$3,000,000

Project Narrative:

7. Please describe or attach to this form a description of your proposed program.

In September, 2020, Housing Forward took bold steps to safeguard those experiencing homelessness by creating a new Interim Housing Program, which is a 24-hour-day program model for individuals and families experiencing homelessness. This move was in response to the COVID-19 crisis, which led the shift away from our rotating emergency overnight shelter services to temporary individual accommodations for individuals and families experiencing homelessness. The location of the program is the former Write Inn Hotel, a 65-bed boutique hotel near downtown Oak Park, which was unable to operate during the pandemic. The initial lease on this property provided an opportunity to expand our medical respite services program through an evolving partnership with Cook County Health.

Housing Forward secured a 12-month lease on the hotel, which was renewed for two consecutive 12-month periods in fiscal year 2022 and 2023. In September 2023, Cook County approved acquisition funds for a total of \$6.5 million for Housing Forward to acquire the Write Inn Hotel and redevelop the property as a fixed site permanent shelter. While the property has been well maintained, it requires capital updates and improvements. Housing Forward is working with IFF on predevelopment tasks including reviewing and updating the development budget and timeline, providing design oversight, assisting with review of cost estimate to update development budget, and supporting requests for project funding.

The Interim Housing and medical respite programs located in the former Write Inn Hotel serve individuals and families who are experiencing homelessness and have a history of residency or ties to West suburban Cook County. This population is a diverse group of people who have one thing in common: they have experienced a catastrophic housing or financial crisis. Often, that crisis is precipitated and/or complicated by a physical disability, chronic health condition, or behavioral health disorder, conditions that are often co-occurring and exacerbated by the lack of access to proper care and resources. In 2022, these individuals and families were 65% male, 35% female; 18% ages 0 to 17; 9% ages 18 to 24; 56% ages 25 to 61; 14% age 62 and over; 3% unreported; 63% were Black, 29% were White, 4% were multi-racial and 4% did not report; 25% were chronically homeless, 1% were U.S. veterans, 4% were domestic violence victims, 25% had a long-term disability. All Housing Forward clients are low or extremely-low-income individuals who are homeless, at imminent risk of homelessness, or formerly homeless and currently housed in a Permanent Supportive Housing program.

Approach/Impact/Goals

8. **How does the proposed initiative address immediate or delayed public health, economic or other community harms resulting from or exacerbated by the Covid-19 public health emergency?**

The proposed capital project is a complete renovation of the former Write Inn Hotel to redevelop the property as a fixed site permanent shelter that will housing interim housing and medical respite services for individuals and families experiencing homelessness. This will ensure these highly impactful services will continue to address the needs of people experiencing homelessness and assist them in securing more permanent housing and greater stability.

The proposed project is creating a permanent home for the Interim Housing Program and RISE Center medical respite services that were established at the height of the pandemic. People in the midst of homelessness and housing crisis were among the most vulnerable populations to the COVID-19 public health crisis. This population lacks the financial resources and social safety net to weather the economic, health and social challenges presented. While the pandemic public health emergency ended in May, 2023, the residual and delayed effects of this crisis will continue to impact this vulnerable population.

9. **Describe overall program goals:**

The overarching goal of the proposed capital project is to renovate and redevelop the Write Inn property to create a fixed site permanent shelter that will be the permanent location of interim housing and medical respite services for individuals and families experiencing homelessness.

Additional project goals are to proactively develop the property to create a safe, up-to-date, and code compliant environment for transitional housing; and , to retrofit the property to provide ADA compliant accommodations.

Program Eligibility:

Strategic Goals

10. **Can you describe a link with this proposed program and the Village Board's goals?**

The proposed project is directly linked to the Village Board goal to provide homelessness assistance by supporting services which assist those currently experiencing homelessness, which is the express goal of the programs located in the project site.

Community Benefit

11. **Describe the residents impacted (#, age) and over what duration; Is this program for low- moderate income recipients?**

The programs that are located within the project are Interim housing and medical respite which provide services to any individual or family, regardless of age. In 2022, the individuals assisted by these programs were 18% ages 0 to 17; 9% ages 18 to 24; 56% ages 25 to 61; 14% ages 62 and over; and 3% unreported.

All Housing Forward clients are low or extremely-low-income individuals who are homeless, at imminent risk of homelessness, or formerly homeless and currently housed in a Supportive Housing program.

Race Equity Impact

12. What racial/ethnic groups are currently most advantaged and most disadvantaged by the issues this proposal seeks to address?

The programs within the project location, Interim Housing Program and RISE Center medical respite services, both assist individuals and families who are experiencing homelessness, an issue that affects all racial/ethnic groups equally. In 2022, the client demographics for these programs were 63% Black, 29% White, 4% Multi-Racial, 1% Asian, 1% Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, 2% refused to disclose; the clients were 15% Hispanic, 84% Non-Hispanic, 1% refused to disclose.

13. What positive impacts on equality and inclusion, if any, could result from this proposal? What racial/ethnic groups could benefit? Will it reduce disparities or discrimination?

Individuals of all races and ethnicities may receive the interim housing and medical respite services located in the former Write Inn Hotel. These programs focus on alleviating homelessness by providing transition housing paired with structured programming with intake and assessment, housing-oriented wrap-around services, case management, pre-tenancy services, on-site health assessments, and income supports either through employment and/or entitlement benefit supports. In the course of their stay, program participants work to achieve a more permanent housing destination. As a result, these programs strive to address housing disparities, and in doing so, help to expand understanding of the issues surrounding homelessness.

Measures & Reporting

14. Do you have program success indicators and progress benchmarks (list them)?

The initial project benchmarks align with the predevelopment phase and are outlined in questions 20 below.

15. How would you describe the impact to the community? How will these impacts be documented and evaluated that you are meeting the intended goals and community benefits? Please provide examples.

The former Write Inn Hotel is a 100-year-old property situated in Oak Park's Frank Lloyd Wright National Historic district, one of three such districts in the Village. While the property is structurally sound, the previous owner did not deploy ongoing and proactive maintenance and improvements. The comprehensive renovation and redevelopment of the property will restore the luster to this vintage structure while retaining its original character. When the project is completed, this vintage property will be enhanced and the historic community it which it's situated.

The building requires capital updates and improvements including a new roof, new windows, external façade repair, as well as interior modifications to redevelop the property as a fixed site permanent shelter. The positive impacts of all project improvements will be outlined in the final project man and documented through the successful completion of the planned renovation/redevelopment activity.

Project Cost

- 16. Total Project cost:** \$14,303,380 **Total ARPA request:** \$500,000
- 17. Provide timetable when funds will be spent:** From the receipt of funds through June, 2025.
- 18. Do you need all the grant funds in one distribution?**
If awarded, the distribution of funds can be negotiated.

Project Sustainability

- 19. Do you have a plan to keep this initiative in place once the one-time ARPA funds are used? Please describe.**

The proposed project is a one-time capital project focused on acquiring the former Write Inn Hotel and renovate/redevelop the property as a fixed-site permanent shelter housing the Interim Housing Program and RISE Center medical respite services. The expenses of the project are one-time and non-recurring.

Timetable

- 20. Provide a comprehensive timeline to implement your proposed program and what is the duration of the program:**

The project pre-development is outlined below:

- 2023: Kick Off Meeting
- 2023: Site Survey / Base Drawing Production
- 2023: TID Interview / Program Refinement
- 2023: Schematic Design Package
- JAN 2024: GC Bid Confirmation / Fundraising
- FEB 2024: Preliminary Village Review - Buildings/zoning/historic
- JAN/ EB 2024: Design Development 100%
- MAY/JUNE 2024: GC Pricing - 100% DD
- AUG/SEPT 2024: Construction Documents 80% / Building Permit Submission
- OCT/NOV 2024: Permit Review
- OCT/NOV 2024: County/Funder Review Submission
- DEC 2024: GC Pricing 80% CD
- DEC 2024: 100% Construction Documents
- JAN 2025: Construction Observation Begins

The final construction plan, calendar and related benchmarks will be finalized upon the finalization of the general contractor and the final construction documents.

Other:

- 21. If you don't receive the funds, what are the impacts and will the program not occur in the future? What would be your plan to get this program running without ARPA assistance?**

The proposed funding will support the renovation of the former Write Inn Hotel and redevelop the property into a fixed-site shelter. In the event Housing Forward does not receive Village of Oak Park ARPA funding, we will continue to explore funding opportunities from other public and private sources. The lack of VOP funding would result in a delay in project activities and a revision in the project timeline.

22. Can your program or a portion of your project wait until January 2023 to coincide with the anticipated next phase of community ARPA requests? What would be lost if this program waited until 2023? Do you have a plan to make up this loss?

The requested funding is an important portion of the overall project revenue budget and timeline. The renovation will occur in several phases; exterior and structural work that do not interrupt the program activities within the building will take place first. Once those are completed, renovation activities

23. Are you requesting ARPA funding from other agencies for this program? No

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Please submit completed application via email to ARPAcomments@oak-park.us .

